

# SOCIAL ACTION

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APRIL 1953

*Rural Welfare*

*Red Mourning*

*Retrenchment*

*Re-Defining Words*

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As. 6

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# SOCIAL ACTION

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## HERE AND THERE

### *On and On*

The opening of the Tilaya Dam and of the Bokaro Thermal Plant marked a great date in India's industrialisation, and showed that the Damodar Valley Corporation at least will be able to achieve its set objects within the first Five Year Plan. These projects dwarf what Red China has accomplished in that line and should confirm India in her methods of progress.

The Community projects are certainly more important and it is heartening to read of the advance made in several places. The greatest difficulty in Community Projects is psychological; the peasantry must be roused to take their due share in this national movement; once our peasants will be aware that these projects are beneficial, they will throw themselves heart and soul in the work; it may take time and possibly the Planning Commission did not make sufficient allowance for the natural slowness or even apathy of the peasantry to take to new methods. What is more regrettable is that in some places, v.g., in Bihar, gross mistakes are made.

The projects had to be national; unhappily here and there they have been turned into party stunts and roused partisan opposition. *Gram Panchayats* are set up on a poli-

tical basis and authentic peasants who chose to vote for the Jharkand party in the turmoil of the last elections are kept at arm's length or thrown back into the crowd of onlookers and malingerers. No worse blunder could be fancied and no worse damage to the civic sense in the countryside. Political differences should be toned down ; coalitions of all good wills should and could be achieved since it is a case of national emergency.

### *Monotonous*

In the bad old days, which Indians graciously try to forget and others do not like to remember, the country was plagued with batches of foreign experts, commissions and committees, who deplored the defects, and deficiencies of the country's banking, currency, agriculture, trade, industry, education and all the rest ; decade after decade, it was a monotonous dirge in largo and maestoso. With independence, the tune has changed ; there are still many visitors, tourists and experts, economists, politicians, social workers, who go round cities and towns with the democratic celerity our air services can provide ; they talk and discourse, as fluently as ever, expatiating on the qualities and qualifications, virtues and merits of the Indian people ; it is all wooing and cooing, all in allegro and tremolo. The change was pleasant, at least for a time ; in the tropics sauces and curries must vary. But by now the tune has grown monotonous ; people listen with patience but they are getting bored. They know well enough what they are and what they want. They have battalions of planners on the front line and full regiments in reserve. They have their fate in their own hands and they mean to win the battle of life. When they will want the advice of others, they know where to get it.

### *A Third What ?*

These thoughts are spontaneous reactions to speeches like those delivered by M. A. Bevan who ventured to advise Indian leaders on home and foreign policy. He recommended agricultural development, which we all want ; he coun-

selling a "Third Force" which we do not want. Many folks talk in terms of a "third" something or other. Like Caesar's Gaul, the world is divided into three parts: the U.S.S.R. complete with satellites, the U.S.A. dragging along a NATO and a MEDO, and the rest. Asian Socialists would like to turn the rest into a Third Camp: whether a refugee camp or a holiday camp, is not clear. Mr. Bevan fancied a Third Force or a Third Bloc, he seemed undecided which, as there is too little cement for a Block and too little strength for a Force. Mr. Nehru prefers to talk of a Third Area, "as much area, as many countries as possible who do not wish to encourage any tendency to war, who wish to work for peace and who do not wish to align themselves with any bloc". It is all a matter of wish; no force, no block, no regional alliance; only a wish and an area, and area with a wish. All nations profess they wish for peace; but they do not agree on the peace they wish for and they are not in the same geographical circumstances. That is how there are three wishes and three areas.

### *Caesars are Buried*

Stalin is dead. He received indiscriminate praise from people who are hypnotized with the size of political power and for whom it is enough for one to be a Big Gun or a Big Noise. Not so for people who mind the purity of means and purpose. Undoubtedly Stalin had gigantic ambitions and resources as economic builder, war patriot, imperialist politician. But he was best defined by himself as the "man of steel", efficient and ruthless like steel. Efficient and ruthless he was, in building up his pyramidal economy on slave labour, in waging war against his rivals and his fellow citizens who stood in his way, in overrunning prostrate Poland, in colonising his satellite countries. But his great sin was not that he broke men's bodies but that he choked their souls. His most nefarious work was that he poisoned his generation with deleterious materialism and perverted ideals. May he rest in peace; and may he have no imitator!

A. L.

## SOME BASIC PROBLEMS OF VILLAGE WELFARE

About thirty miles due north of Bombay, and less than a mile from the Western railway station of Bassein Road, lies the ancient village of Manikpur. According to the calculations of the oldest inhabitants, their village of nearly three thousand souls, is well over a century in existence! There are no ancient "ruins" in the village to mark the age of the settlement, but when you enter the larger houses to enjoy the hospitality of a kindly people, the well worn rafters, beams and door-posts tell a story which may well have had its beginnings in the distant past. More fortunate than many another Indian village, Manikpur draws, its material prosperity both from its proximity to the city of Bombay, and from its own agricultural lands. Each morning the village adds its quota of those thousands of office workers, shop assistants, factory hands and students who daily swell the population of the metropolis. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that on a week-day the village is practically empty of its menfolk, except those who have reached the age-limit of active labour.

The long established tradition whereby the men seek employment in the city, and are absent from their homes, for the greater part of the week from early morning till late at night, appears to have interesting repercussions on the social life of the village. Thus, the girls and womenfolk, for the most part, still content to busy themselves with the thousand chores which fall to the lot of the village housewife seldom share the degree of literacy enjoyed by their brothers and husbands; and this, in turn tends to create in the women an attitude of disinterestedness towards any reform or improvement in the life of the village. On the other hand, while the men spend most of their time in the city, and there enjoy the amenities of urban life, to whatever degree these may exist, there is a danger that village improve-



ment hardly enters into the concern of the men ; and so, Manikpur despite its healthy situation, and the prosperity of its inhabitants still bears the stamp of primitive living conditions—the absence of sanitation in the houses, of any drainage system, of the ordinary rules of domestic hygiene, of roads and lanes free from cess-pools, rubbish dumps and straying cattle.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that such conditions are tolerated with complete complacency. The social conscience is slowly stirring in the village ; there are many who would like to bring about a definite improvement in the living conditions of the settlement, and are now busy searching for ways and means to achieve this end. The difficulties are enormous. From the view point of the social worker, social betterment must be preceded by a change in the mentality and outlook of the greater part of the population. Preconceived, " text book " methods and principles alone are insufficient. The helpful social worker must make the round of the village, not once but many times, to record from his own personal investigations the various aspects of village life, such as, housing, sanitation, the condition of the roads and lanes and so on. It helps greatly to meet as many people as possible, and tactfully let them speak their views about village life, and their likes and dislikes regarding the conditions which obtain. It is most important to have a clear view about the *people's opinion*, on social betterment. This is only to say, for instance, that the road you lay down, or the well you dig will serve no useful purpose, unless the village folk appreciate such amenities. To be sure, there must be some " theory of village-reconstruction ", but theory must be reduced to practise in each case for no two villages, even in the same area, present the same problems. Besides the fact, that habit and long endured ways of living do not easily yield to change, there is the obvious truth that unless the people *realise* the benefits which will follow from social reorganisation, they will be chary of all innovations, refuse their co-operation and even oppose all plans for social wel-

fare. To obtain this "atmosphere" is, perhaps, the first and most difficult task which faces the social worker in our villages. Two methods are, generally, employed to create this atmosphere: one, the totalitarian way of regimentation, coercion and force, such as are being employed in the building of New China; the other is the method of persuasion, discussion and demonstration so as to win the free and voluntary co-operation of the village population in a concerted effort for village reorganisation. It need hardly be said, that while the second method is more difficult, its yield, in long term results, is always more lasting and satisfying.

How is Manikpur attempting to solve this difficult problem of voluntary co-operation and so establish the necessary atmosphere, which must be the prelude to all social reconstruction? Fortunately, the village panchayat is fully conscious of the imperative necessity of co-operation among the people. As a first step, an intensive "Propaganda drive" has been planned and it is beamed directly towards those elements of the village whose co-operation and help are essential for the success of the welfare plan. Social welfare aims at more than merely satisfying immediate material needs, it attempts to teach the people to help themselves, and therefore, our propaganda drive plans not merely to arouse in the people a passing interest in social well being, but to help them to demonstrate a sustained effort which may be built into a habit, and so become the ordinary way of life. Hence, a periodic clean up of the village, by outside social workers from schools and colleges may be a useful exercise of charity, but helps little towards the rehabilitation of the village. "The social workers are gone and everything is as dirty as before!" exclaimed a disconcerted villager to the author a few days after an enthusiastic college "cleaning squad" had visited the village! That is exactly the difficulty. No amount of outside help can substitute for the effort the people, themselves, must put forth, if they want a clean village. A cleaning squad drawn from the village youth, as has been started in Manikpur, tends to give better results,

and to this squad may be attached students resident in the village. Unfortunately, and speaking in general, our education appears to be quite divorced from all practical social effort, and so it is not uncommon to find persons with respectable academic degrees, perfectly unconcerned about, and quite content to live in, surroundings which are little becoming human dignity. Moreover they show no thought or attempt to bring such surroundings into line with the needs of sound, healthy living. Such anomalies are found both in urban and rural areas.

Together with the creation of this atmosphere for social reconstruction, the village panchayat has drawn up a list of priorities in consultation with the people. Sanitation comes first on the list, and in concrete terms it means the laying of a good drainage-system. Strangely enough, the attempt to outline the course of the drains has revealed the need of solving two prior problems—the demarcation of property-boundaries in the village, and the land needed for the roads and lanes. Built up from very early times when each householder erected his house where he pleased and occupied as much land as he thought good, the village and local authorities possess no legal document indicating the limits of each householder's property! Thus, boundaries, are moved as one pleases and road-space is reduced or increased accordingly. Obviously there is no question of any drainage-system until this problem is solved. The Local Board would like to see an amicable settlement of the trouble, but since land-boundaries are a sore point of dispute, even between the closest of friends, it has been judged most expedient to engage the services of a government surveyor who, armed with the necessary powers from the local authority, will determine the boundaries of each householder. The draft survey map aims not only at fixing the property-boundaries and the course of drains, but also tries to outline the design of a model village, with its reconditioned houses, cattle-shelters, cattle-ponds, places of convenience, play grounds for the children and so on. Outside the village limits there is al-

ready a fine school and near it a small dispensary is to be erected. As each step in the realisation of the plan is accomplished, meetings and discussions have been planned so that every member of the community may better understand and contribute towards the collective responsibility of the whole village. Though the initiative may come from the panchayat, the programme must have the support of the whole village if success is to be secured ; and experience has proved that civic responsibility can be built into the pattern of life by frequent repetitions of our social obligations through meetings and discussions.

"My house is over fifty years old," said a proud owner to the author, "and it is now just as it was in the days of my great grand-father !" Indeed, the structure, made of strong dark wood, carried all the signs of age and, except for a few patches on the roof, showed no signs of elaborate reconditioning. The thing that intrigues one most, perhaps, is that generation after generation have lived in a dwelling into which the light hardly penetrates, which lacks adequate fresh air and sanitation, without, seemingly, any great discomfort ! It is easy, then, to imagine how difficult a task it is to convince such a householder that, his ancient dwelling should give place to one which measures up to all the modern specifications of light, air, sanitation and room-space in keeping with the development of the modern science of hygiene ! Another massive structure is a kind of a community-dwelling erected on a mud plinth three to four feet high. Sometimes each structure contains from ten to twelve rooms, so divided off by a long corridor that three to four families occupy each dwelling. The interior of such houses is plunged in the usual darkness and gloom and is without any ventilation. Occasionally the roof extends over the plinth and there the cattle are sheltered. In the circumstances which obtain in this village, the problem of housing is as complex and difficult as that found in any urban area. Land in the village for building purposes is no longer available, and rebuilding on present sites after demolishing the old structure,

involves the still greater problem of temporary accommodation while the new building is being erected. The only working solution, so far discovered, seems to be to recondition the old structure in parts ; so the inmates continue living in one section of the house while the other is being reconditioned. This method has been tried and found fairly satisfactory. In the design of the house, uniformity has not been insisted upon ; and provided the simple demands of sanitation, ventilation and hygiene have been satisfied, householders are free to choose their own designs. It is still too early to say how far this plan for reconditioning houses in Manikpur will succeed.

Though it is conceivable, and perhaps, even possible to undertake village social rehabilitation by means of private agencies, there are many obvious advantages in working with and through the village panchayat. The "panches" form the local authority of the village, and are usually partly nominated by the government and partly elected by the people, thus linking the government and the people. Village welfare falls within the jurisdiction of the panchayat, and when the resources of the village are insufficient to meet the demands of improvement, it is through the panchayat that government assistance may be effectively secured. Such assistance is the more readily given due to the tendency of the government to make the panchayat, and rightly so, an efficient local authority. All this does not mean that our voluntary village workers should take no part in the social uplift of their village : social workers, in fact, should try and associate voluntary workers with the social work of the panchayat, and in newly established panchayats, social workers will find ample scope for guiding the social activities of the panches. Here in Manikpur an attempt is being made to associate the different Sodalities with village welfare, and especially the Sodalities of the women of the village. It is common knowledge that few Sodalities take any active part in the social apostolate in India, and yet, every urban and rural area affords an extensive

field for Sodalists, both men and women, to engage in such activity. In our rural areas, the various aspects of village welfare, such as, domestic cleanliness, the punctuality of children at school, the development of small crafts, the organisation of village games, sports and recreation in general, the support of the village co-operative society, and so on may very usefully become the "action" of our village Sodalities. The aim of such activity should be carefully and clearly explained to each Sodality member; the best results seem to come from discussions about the project, till the aim and purpose emerges clear and distinct. Next, the ways and means adopted should be perfectly understood by each worker, and here details as to persons, time and place must be worked out till each one knows what he or she is expected to accomplish. Reports on work done should be encouraged, and at meetings, members should give an account of their methods of approach and investigations made. This type of activity should be all the more effective because it will draw its force and power from the prayers and religious devotions which bind every Sodalist, and which make up a "spiritual power house" radiating the active charity of Christ among the children of God.

C. C. Clump.

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## THE MAN OF STEEL

So Josef Vissarionovich Djughashvili, better known and feared as Stalin, has gone the way of all flesh. *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum*: one would very much like to apply this to Stalin. What judgement God passes on his deeds we do not know except that God's judgements are juster and more merciful than those of men. Whatever sentence is to be passed we may safely leave to God Whose judgement unlike that of men will not err. But though we often are ignorant of all the motives which inspire action and therefore must

be reserved in our judgement of others, nonetheless a man cannot disassociate himself from his acts and their repercussions on others.

It has been said of Stalin that he was "expert only in the business of acquiring and retaining authority". The Generalissimo made few incursions into theory and with one or two notable exceptions contented himself to repeat monotonously the orthodox Lenin-Marxist doctrine. But in obtaining and retaining power he has no modern rivals: even Mussolini and Hitler, the two comparisons that spring readily to mind, fade into insignificance besides him.

Born on December 21, 1879, in Gori, Georgia, the son of a cobbler, at fourteen he entered the Orthodox Church seminary and was subsequently dismissed for Marxist activities. It would be unwise to make much of this "vocation". His mother was, according to reports, pious and the vocation may well have been hers and not his. Moreover, it would not be the first time in history that a minor seminary had been used as a means for advancing one's studies while the young aspirant had no clear idea as to what would happen afterwards.

After leaving the seminary, Stalin's history up to the death of Lenin is very much that of Bolshevism, and his rise was that of his Party. A man of action, he appeared dull, boorish and insignificant besides the brilliant dialectics of Lenin and other old Bolsheviks like Trotsky, Boukharin, Zinoviev and Kamanev. In fact, it was just this inconspicuousness that permitted him to build up power for himself, unsuspected, until too late, by his more brilliant companions. It was only when Lenin was a very sick man and near death that he foresaw the accumulation of power in the hands of Stalin and wrote to his companions to have him removed from his position of General Secretary and to choose another, more loyal and more devoted to the comrades. There was a moving scene when Lenin's companions received this request of their leader and debated whether to make it contents public. Had they done so, it is unlikely that Lenin's mantle

would have fallen on Stalin's rather inconspicuous shoulders. But they did not make that letter public and Stalin was chosen as the new leader. The latter derived the fullest benefit from this lesson for never again was anyone to raise any serious criticism against him who mercilessly 'liquidated' his opponents and built up for himself a reputation of infallibility.

Once in the saddle there was never again a chance of unseating this determined rider who rode rough-shod over all opposition, heading for Communist society as he understood it. The story from 1930 till Hitler attacked Russia is one of increasing severity: the brutal liquidation of the kulaks, smallholders, of whom millions perished, must always remain a dark and ugly blotch on Stalin's career. At this time too, Stalin's second wife, Nadia Alliluyeva, died, most probably by her own hand, unable to bear the sight of the immense suffering caused by her husband's action. Shortly after, Stalin, the man of steel, is reported to have lost his usual self-reliance, and offered his resignation to the Politbureau, already weakened by purges. No one dared to stand up and tell Stalin that he was doing the right thing since to do so was to run a great risk. A few months later he was full of confidence again and the opportunity had passed. (Cf. I. Deutcher, *Stalin*, p. 334-35, Oxford Univ. Press. This is an excellent and scholarly biography of Stalin up to the year 1945).

The terrible purges of 1936-38, removed the last vestiges of any open opposition, whether real or imagined, and Stalin, secure in his power, made his pact with Hitler that enabled the latter to launch his offensive on the West without fear of being attacked in his turn from the East. When Russia was attacked in her turn, Russians fought to defend not Communism but their land from a brutal invader. The war undoubtedly added enormously to Stalin's prestige. He wisely allowed patriotism to revive and as real head of the country he became symbolic of a people's gallant resistance. How great a military genius the Generalissimo was,



we can leave to later history to discover, but Russian victories both over the Germans and the no less important diplomatic victories over his western allies made Stalin one of the world's most important men, a position he held with increasing renown till his death.

In what way has Stalin influenced us here in India? This can best be answered if we look back and consider whether under Stalin Communism looked west or east. In nineteenth century Russia there were the Slavophiles, those who considered that Russia had a special mission of her own to lead her citizens and even other peoples along the Russian path independently of the west, and there were the Westernisers who would model Russia on Europe. When Marxism came to Russia it attracted the western branch for Marxism is a western product. Moreover, prominent early Marxists like Lenin were Russian emigres who had spent many years in Europe, and though Lenin foresaw the possibilities of communism spreading throughout Asia owing to the social and political ferment in that continent, he habitually turned west for his inspiration. But Stalin, born in Georgia on the margin between east and west, never having been out of Russia except for a short visit, represented the eastern blend in Russian communism. He never really held Lenin's belief that the West because of its industrialism and advanced proletariat was destined to lead a world-wide communist revolution. It is significant that his earlier contributions to the question of the relative importance for Communism of the east and west are entitled: 'Do not forget the East', and '*Ex Oriente Lux*'. He certainly did not picture the west as the leader of a proletarian revolution, but as something dark and backward, for he wrote: "*Ex oriente lux*. The west with its imperial cannibals has become the centre of darkness and slavery. The task is to destroy that centre to the joy and jubilation of the toilers of all countries." And at a conference of Moslem communists who were to make propaganda in India, China and Iran he exhorted: "Once and for all you must learn the truth that he

who wants the triumph of Socialism (Communism) cannot afford to forget the East." These were Stalin's sentiments some thirty-five years ago and the passage of time was only to emphasise them for at his death the light of the Red Star was shining very bright over Asia.

Stalin's contempt for the West had much to do with his theory of 'Socialism in one country'. (Socialism here means the stage before perfect Communism, i.e., the stage now reached by Russia today.) Even after the Bolshevik revolution had taken place in 1917, Lenin still held that it would be impossible for Russia to remain socialist unless the west also went socialist. The reason being that other countries with a higher and deeper culture would impose their way of living on the weaker, namely, Russia, were she alone to be socialised. This is profoundly true and has frequently happened in the history of nations. But there was apparently a way out and Stalin, determined not to be dependent on the west, chose that way and all it involved. It involved much and it had to be done rapidly. Russia had to catch up with the west in industrialization and technology so that she could be independent of western influence. But to industrialize a backward agricultural country in a couple of decades meant immense sacrifices and immense power. Stalin built up the power and imposed the sacrifices. In order that the programme of industrialization should proceed without opposition and at any cost, supreme and absolute power had to be in his hands. Those who opposed were crushed like beetles beneath a heavy boot. All must be sacrificed to achieve the end in view and any criticism was equivalent to treason and treated as such. But though criticism could be suppressed within the country, some criticism from the outside world would surely find its way on to Russian soil. The Iron Curtain therefore became a necessity to seal off Russia hermetically from the rest of the world while Socialism was being built in one country.

Having proved that Socialism could be built in one state regardless of the rest of the world, and in the process of do-

ing so, having built up perhaps the most powerful totalitarian regime the world has ever known, it was but a further natural step for Russia in the person of Stalin to wish to impose her way of life on her neighbours. Stalinism has turned to imperialism. And so millions today, willingly or unwillingly, accordingly as they are directly under Soviet control or not, turn to Moscow for guidance and are taught to look to Russia as their true motherland. This constitutes a great triumph for Stalinism and were the accumulation of power man's sole aim in life then Stalin should have enjoyed a high degree of contentment since few men in history have wielded the power that was his. But death strips man naked of all power and leaves him to be judged not by the amount of power he yielded but by the way in which he used it. On this count one cannot but conclude that Stalin has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Writing three days after the death of Stalin, it is not possible to give an appreciation of the reaction of the national press to this event, but from what it was possible to read and hear there appears a certain lack of balance. There is too much adulation for the material achievements and a glossing over, excusing or ignoring of the terrible cost in liberty and human lives. It is perfectly true that editorials and speeches delivered a few days after Stalin's death are not the occasion for any final verdict. But more discreet utterances would have been in place both from newspapers and from highly placed politicians. One leading paper concluded its editorial: "As the world understands greatness, he was undoubtedly great". Unwittingly, this is a poor compliment to Marshal Stalin and a very sad comment on the world.

Whether the death of Stalin will make the cold war colder or hot, whether peaceful co-existence is more or less possible now than before, whether Russia will remain as monolithic as before or show serious signs of interior dissension, will be the happy hunting ground of writers and journalists for many a day to come. To enter into these

questions is beyond the modest scope of *Social Action* and we must leave this fascinating game to our readers. But in the interval we hope that they will find time to utter a prayer that Marshal Stalin may find that peace he never enjoyed on earth—the peace the world cannot give.

A. Nevett.

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## RETRENCHMENT

The fear of being served with the fatal notice of discharge is slowly spreading through all ranks of workmen these last few months. Nearly a third of the employees, including some officers, of the Nationalised Transport Service in Bombay State were recently asked to quit. In Madras, large numbers of employees of the State Electrical Department engaged in putting through the new schemes of electrifying and supplying power to the town and the countryside were summarily dismissed because the finance allocated to the scheme had all been used up. The fear of unemployment overshadows workmen of the Textile Industries throughout the country, because the employers in the name of 'rationalisation' are demanding new types of machinery which will make severe inroads into the labour force. Workmen of the Defence Industries have already gone on strike to prevent retrenchment, while the various unions of the aviation firms about to be nationalised have pleaded with the government for an assurance of security in their jobs when the companies cease to exist as private and independent units. Due to a shortage of funds, 1,500 employees, comprising skilled and unskilled labour and junior engineers working in the Andhra Power Projects, were discharged. The number of persons registering for employment at the official labour exchanges in the country have increased from 321,656 in January, 1952 to 407,872 in October, 1952. Although these figures need not necessarily imply an increase

in industrial unemployment, still they partially reveal the existence of unwanted labour in the country. The picture is gloomy enough and the prospects of the future are none too bright despite the vast government projects and heavy government expenditure under the Five-Year Plan.

### *In India*

While in the West, unemployment benefit brings some relief to the worker without a job, in India no such provision exists. It is true that social security measures are being tried out in some of the larger, industrial towns, but they do not include unemployment insurance. At most a man can expect to get a small provident fund enough to tide over a short period, but far from the ample security that he requires. Retrenchment therefore becomes a dreaded word; it usually portends an empty purse, starving children and sometimes a ruined home. Worse still, it often hastens the final surrender into the clutches of the money-lender.

### *No Refuge*

If a workman has preserved his contacts with his village, well and good. He has still some source of security against an uncertain future. But if these too have been completely sundered, he becomes practically a homeless wanderer on the streets. Of course he might register with a Government Employment Exchange, or a private employment exchange, wherever they exist, but there are generally so many names on the waiting list that the applicant's hopes of finding work are almost instantaneously submerged. Charitable societies might help him for some time, but normally it is to his relations and the close acquaintances of his caste that he betakes himself. If he is a member of a joint-family, he need not fear, unless the other members of the family are hit by the same ill-fortune. But with the slow disintegration of such ancient social bonds, and with no new social structure or amenity to take their place,

the lot of the unemployed workman becomes very hard indeed.

### *Unemployment*

The causes of unemployment are extremely complex. They vary with the economic background of each country and the prevailing stage of industrialization. India's vast man-power spells potential unskilled labour running into millions. But until this labour can be suitably trained and harnessed to the right type of job, the unemployment figures will be high and show ever rising totals. Even in an advanced industrial country a certain mobility of labour is required to allow for changes in demand in a free market, for technological improvement through the introduction of new types of machinery, and for changes in financial policy that affect prices and production. Consequently, a certain measure of unemployment must always be taken for granted, and need not necessarily arouse anxiety. And an enlightened Government makes provision for such pockets of unemployment by means of Unemployment Benefit.

### *Various Measures*

But when in times of depression, the unemployment index rises dangerously high, the public authorities resort to large-scale public works, in order to provide the unemployed with work and a salary to procure the necessities of life. The new demand for goods that is set in motion by the public authorities has a beneficial effect on the whole economy, because it oils the wheels of industry, as it were, and causes them to whirl again on the way to recovery. But apart from such government measures during a depression, there are a number of methods of retrenching men during normal times that help to soften the blow. These have gradually grown up through custom and the traditions of the industrial courts. Thus in selecting the men to be discharged, certain conditions have to be observed. The length of service has to be taken into account; the last man to join will be the first to go. But other considerations like in-

telligence and capability will exert their influence. Men on the verge of retirement might also be asked to make room for younger men. Instead of outright dismissal, the hours of work might be reduced, and overtime eliminated. The unions might appeal against a discharge, especially if it is an unjust one. Under a collective agreement, the unions might claim the right to be consulted or at least informed when workmen have to be discharged. In general the law requires the employer to give the employee one month's notice before discharging him, or one month's pay in lieu of notice. But besides the month's pay, it might be agreed that the discharged workman be granted dismissal or severance pay by the employer.

### *Severance Pay*

A typical example of severance or dismissal pay is the agreement between the Millowners of Ahmedabad and the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in September, 1949 to compensate the retrenched person. The agreement applies to all persons who were to be retrenched from the mills for the sake of 'rationalisation'. Severance Pay or 'compensation' as it is termed in the agreement was to be paid on the following scale:—

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Persons with continuous service of 6 months or over but under 1 year on the date of discharge | Wages and D.A. for 5 days  |
| 2. Persons with continuous service of full 1 year  | Wages and D.A. for 10 days |
| 3. Persons with continuous service of full 2 years   | Wages and D.A. for 20 days |
| 4. Persons with continuous service of full 3 years   | Wages and D.A. for 45 days |
| 5. Persons with continuous service of full 4 years   | Wages and D.A. for 60 days |
| 6. Persons with continuous service of full 5 years   | Wages and D.A. for 75 days |

Though the compensation was comparatively slight, the retrenchment was restricted to persons who had been employed for five years and below. Persons who were to receive such compensation were not to be given any notice or a month's pay in lieu thereof. Before the retrenchment was to take place, the employer had to contact the Labour Association and within a period of 14 days the Labour Association would enter into an agreement with the millowners on this particular issue.

In the case of the Madras Port Trust employees who voluntarily surrendered their jobs during the recession period, the maximum amount of leave and a specific increase of their provident fund was granted to them, determined according to the length of their service.

### The Courts

Some interesting cases in regard to retrenchment have come up recently before the Courts for adjudication. The Upper Sugar Works, Khatauli, retrenched 93 workmen, who were engaged on the construction of certain buildings. Prior to the retrenchment, the workmen had struck work on the issue of low wages. The management had agreed to pay them Rs. 55 a month of 26 days, and the agreement had been set down in writing and signed by representatives of both the management and the union. Soon after, 93 of the workmen had been dismissed on grounds of economy. Their work was leased out to building contractors.

The Labour Appellate Tribunal rightly held that the workmen had been retrenched not because they were surplus hands, but because the company wanted to evade the obligations of the agreement. The Company was therefore acting *mala fide* in dismissing the workmen. The Tribunal passed orders that they should be reinstated.

A second interesting case is that of the Tata Oil Mills, Ltd., Tatapuram. The management tried to retrench 59 of their employees, on grounds of their being surplus staff. The Staff Association of the Company appealed to the In-



dustrial Tribunal on behalf of the men. After considering the case, the Tribunal came to the conclusion that there was no cause for retrenchment. The men were all old hands of the company; some of them had worked for as many as 10 years, had successfully passed their period of probation, and had given up prospects of employment elsewhere due to government regulations when joining the firm. They were neither incompetent or insubordinate. The only reason, said the adjudicator, for their dismissal was that the company wanted to make more profits.

The Company appealed against the decision and won their case in the Appellate Tribunal, which reversed the decision. But before the Adjudicator's award could take effect, the State Government of Travancore-Cochin annulled the decision and directed the Company to retain the men for reasons of public safety and security.

A third interesting case is that of Dewar's Garage and Engineering Works, West Bengal. Because their import licence quota was slashed from Rs. 43½ lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs, the company argued that it had ample cause for retrenching 44 workers. Before the issue of the reduced licence quota, the workmen had presented a charter of their demands to management and had even approached the Conciliation Officer to enforce their claims. While the proceedings were being held, the notice of discharge was given to the 44 employees, without the permission of the Conciliation Officer. This is against the law and the company had to suffer the consequences of their legal mistake. To aggravate the situation, the Company had been employing contractors to do their overtime work, and because they disliked the union, had required their employees to sign a pledge that they would not join the union. Although the company maintained that in their policy of retrenchment they were following the principle of 'the last to come must be the first to go', as a matter of fact they had discharged those whom they considered to be 'disloyal'. Of course they lost the case.

### **Government Interference**

Under Section 15 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1950, Government, whether Central or State, had been permitted to intervene in the decisions of Courts. In requesting Parliament for such powers, the Hon'le Sri Jagjivan Ram explained the issue clearly and forcibly. He said, "At the very outset I would urge that some distinction should be made between judicial justice and social justice. At present whenever we think about justice we think only about judicial justice. We forget that labour legislation is not meant for judicial justice: it is meant for social justice. If we make that distinction between judicial and social justice it may be helpful to us in appreciating that some sort of interference by Government in cases where such interference is necessary becomes inevitable. What is the effect of judicial justice, or a judicial judgment or a judicial award? As I remarked on a previous occasion, it affects two individuals or two groups of individuals at the most, but it does not affect society as a whole. It does not purport to make any change in the existing social order. If any labour legislation does not aim at that, it does not fulfil its objective. Judging from this angle we will have to admit that our attention is to administer social justice with a view to changing the existing social order, so that justice may be ensured to that section of society which so long has been deprived of it. Without meaning any reflection on the judiciary of the country, if an award is given by the judiciary or a tribunal, where Government feels that the social objective which is the goal of Government has not been kept in view by the judiciary or the tribunal while giving the statement or award, do you not think it incumbent on Government to interfere with the award and modify it in order to make it amenable to the objective before Government?"

### **Principles**

In judging cases of retrenchment, the adjudicators of the Industrial Courts are now being guided by the judgments

of their predecessors and by adapting themselves to changing circumstances according to their lights.

The right of the employer to dismiss his employee for good reasons is upheld. But management must prove conclusively that the reasons for dismissal are sufficient. The mere desire to increase profits or competitive strength would not be justifiable reasons for discharge. If management fails to prove its case in court, the case must be dismissed. But if management can show good reasons for its policy it falls to the union to prove that the employer is acting *malafide*, or that it seeks to victimise or discriminate against certain of its employees, or that its reasons for dismissal are not sufficient. But the whole aspect of the case changes, if the employee or workmen is at fault, and is discharged for incompetence or insubordination.

When through no fault of their own, workmen are discharged and there are sufficient reasons for their dismissal on the part of the employer, then the following procedure is roughly to be followed :—

1. The last to have been employed must be the first to go.
2. Normally a workman is expected to receive a month's notice before discharge or in lieu of it, one month's wages.
3. In cases that have come up before the Courts, varying degrees of compensation have been awarded by the adjudicators according to their ideas of fairness and social propriety. The longer the service, the greater the compensation imposed by the Courts. But the Courts have never held that the workman has a right to compensation.
4. Though length of service is the first consideration in order of retrenchment of employees, the Courts have also mentioned that elderly persons, persons medically unfit, habitual absentees, should be the next liable for discharge.

5. Finally to avoid labour unrest, the Adjudicators think it advisable that the unions be informed and their leaders be consulted, before retrenchment takes place.

A. Fonseca.

## SOCIAL WORK, SERVICE AND ACTION

Aspirants to social work or social service are occasionally at a loss when asked to define or describe their purpose and activity, and to assign their boundaries. They will welcome the following quotations which reflect views in different countries.

### U.S.A.

M. A. J. Altmeyer, Commissioner for Social Security, Federal Security Agency :

"At one time, not so long ago, our concept of social work included, almost exclusively, relief and service to the underprivileged and disadvantaged . . . Social work was thought of largely in terms of adjusting the individual to his environment rather than in terms of bringing environmental forces into play to assist the individual . . . The newer concept of social work, as I view it, is that it consists not only of counselling and assisting the individual and family in making the necessary adjustments to environment, but, more importantly, it consists of marshalling community resources to promote the well-being of individuals and families generally . . . We think in terms of all individuals and families . . . We think not in terms of 'cure' or even 'prevention' but in affirmative terms of actively promoting well-being rather than simply avoiding ill-being".

(A. E. Fink : *The Field of Social Work*, New York, Holt, 1951)

Miss K. Lenroot, chief of the Federal Children's Bureau, lists the emerging purposes of social work as follows:—

1. Material Security through economic and political organisation that will assure every individual and every family the means of satisfying basic material wants.
2. Emotional security through personal and social adjustments.
3. Social justice through fair and ordered relationships between groups with adequate opportunities for all groups.
4. Social achievements through collective endeavour.
5. Spiritual power through philosophic and religious thought.

(Helen I. Clarke : *Principles and Practice of Social Work*. New York ; Appleton, 1947)

### England

The terms "social service" and "the social services" are relatively modern . . . They are terms which are sometimes used rather vaguely, and universal agreement has not yet been reached as to which services should be classified as "social". Some vagueness is inevitable and it may even be desirable, in a sphere in which growth and change are continually taking place . . .

The generally accepted hall-mark of social service is that of direct concern with the personal well-being of the individual . . . Although a public utility service is undoubtedly for the public benefit, the main concern of the officer in charge is to see that the facilities provided are adequate in amount and efficient in operation . . . His interest is in the object provided and not in the people who make use of it. The social worker on the other hand, is concerned not only with the efficient administration of a particular service, but with the effects of its use on the personalities and relationships of the people taking advantage of it. Social ser-

vice is essentially "the manifestation of a personal interest in a human situation", a recognition both of the uniqueness of the individual and of our common humanity... The more important modern developments in social service and the social services which have led up to the situation today are then, the increasingly active and prominent part played by the State, which has gradually assumed responsibility for meeting the basic needs of all its citizens; the widening of the scope of social services to include the whole community; the acceptance of the benefits they confer as rights; the increased importance attached to the adjustment of the relationships as well as of meeting material needs; the increased and increasing influence of the scientific attitude and the development of social research, and the growth of professionalism.

(M. Penelope Hall, *The Social Services of Modern England*. London: Routledge, 1952)

#### *France*

In *Service Social dans le Monde*, (October 1952) Fr. P. Virton writes about the differences between terms which are often confused, charity, social service, social action. The words are taken in the meaning they have in France.

1. Whilst private charity, result of personal contact between beneficiary and benefactor, is in the plane of that charity springing more from affectivity than from intelligence, social service reaching individuals as members of groups, is found rather in the plane of solidarity and of justice; it comes from the head rather than from the heart.
2. In actual life the difference is shown when private charity seeks to be more rationally efficacious and yet the agents of social service leaven up their deeds with a spirit of love which enables them to discover the "person" in their client.
3. Nevertheless a difference persists: private charity is dispensed by a higher person who seeks a link of charity with the needy. Social service is not left to individual

initiative but is mandated by a charitable or other organisation public or private. There is thus no real competition between private charity and the social service of other organisations. Whence it is necessary to include private charity in the plan of co-ordination.

4. Neither charity nor social service are the equivalent of social action. Social action aims at reforming institutions; private charity and social service tend to correct the errors or misdeeds of the existing social order and to help the needy, and social order does not necessarily come into the purpose.

5. Nevertheless private charity and social service play an important role in fostering the spirit seeking to change the social order; it greatly helps in noticing the existing disorders, and remedying them, either in the name of charity or in the name of social justice.

### *Belgium*

In Belgium, according to Melle de Nave's report at the Sixth International Conference of Social Work (Madras), the term "Social Service" is given various applications. It is used to designate:

(a) Every action organised with the aim of improving the framework and structures of society, with a view to better the conditions of the less fortunate. Hence it is confused with what is better called "social Action".

(b) Services and works put at the disposal of the poor or of certain groups e.g., savings banks, insurance schemes, canteens, nurseries, homes, etc.

If dealing with health, they are usually called medical-social services.

(c) More specifically, a method which aims at the adaptation or re-adaptation of individuals or families economically, socially or psychologically handicapped for normal conditions of life. It is practised in services of individual cases (Social Case-work) or in groups (Social Group Work).

In Belgium 'social assistants' are more and more called upon to transform the old methods of assistance through the method of social service.

(d) In a more general way, all professional work done by a "social assistant" whether in the field of action or social accomplishments or social work.

(*Service Social dans le Monde*, January 53)

U.N.O.

A definition which should have international validity was proposed by the United Nations Social Commission. It runs as follows:—

Social work as it is actually carried on has certain general characteristics in all countries.

1. It is a helping activity, designed to give assistance in respect to problems that prevent individuals, families, and groups from achieving a minimum desirable standard of social and economic well-being.
2. It is a "social" activity, carried on not for personal profit by private practitioners but under the auspices of organizations, governmental or non-governmental or both, established for the benefit of members of the community regarded as requiring assistance.
3. It is a "liaison" activity, through which disadvantaged individuals, families, and groups may tap all the resources in the community available to meet their unsatisfied needs . . . .

Social work may be said to strive towards the following objectives:—

1. It seeks to see—and assist—individuals, families, and groups in relation to the many social and economic forces, by which they are affected, and differs in this respect from certain allied activities, such as health, education, religion, etc. The latter share its general objective of promoting social well-being, but tend to exclude all but certain aspects of the socio-economic environment from their purview . . . The social worker, on the other hand, cannot exclude from



his consideration any aspect of the life of the person who seeks help in solving problems of social adjustment . . . the well-trained social worker makes the nearest possible approach to full and constant awareness of the interplay of social, economic, and psychological forces in the lives of the troubled people who come to him for assistance . . .

2. Consequently, it may be said that social work seeks to perform an integrating function for which no other provision is made in contemporary society. The well-trained social worker must therefore be familiar with and know how to enlist the co-operation of all existing social institutions (the school, the medical or psychiatric clinic, the hospital, the church, the court, the employment office, the community centre, etc.) in order that individuals, families, and groups may derive full benefit from the facilities and services available in the community for promoting and maintaining social well-being.

3. Beyond all this, social work, by fixing attention on specific social ills and pointing to the need for appropriate remedial and preventive service, seeks to maximize the resources available in the community for promoting social well-being. The well-trained social worker tends to become a "social diagnostician" for the community, *i.e.*, his day-to-day work enables him to identify classes of problems requiring orderly solution by the community, or classes of persons who can be brought to normal social and economic functioning only through the creation of special community resources. The social worker here performs a primarily technical and instrumental function calculated to make more rational, more intelligent, and more effective (a) the efforts of the community in promoting social well-being, and (b) the efforts of individuals, families, and groups to overcome obstacles to productive and satisfying living.

(E/CN. 5/196, New York, United Nations, Feb. 50)

## India

As the profession of social worker is still in the early stages of its development, a concise definition of its spirit, as given by Mrs. Ashadevi Arayanauyakam at the Social Commission of the U.N.O. (May 15, 1952) will be appreciated: A social worker in India is considered as the "servant of the village" or the "servant of the people". Our master Gandhiji defined his fellow-workers and himself as "the servants of God with the poor and the humble".

(*Service Social dans le Monde*, Jan. 1953)

A. LAHURI.

## PROGRESS REPORT

Recent information from quarters closely associated with the I.I.S.O. is most encouraging. With the opening of the coming academic year, diploma courses in social sciences will begin in several colleges. Stella Maris College in Mylapore is keeping the lead. It will open its second annual course on June 25th with the formal recognition of the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore and the affiliation to the Catholic International Union for Social Service. The school intends providing Women Graduates with a thorough training in the various theoretical and practical branches of social work and preparing them for a life dedicated to the cause of the underprivileged classes and to the development of New India.

Particulars about courses and hostel accommodation can be had from Rev. Mother Superior, Stella Maris School of Social Service, Palace Road, Mylapore, Madras 4.

From amongst the reports about social work done in various Colleges (St. Joseph's, Trichinopoly; Loyola, Madras; St. Xavier's, Bombay; St. Xavier's, Calcutta, etc.), the Fifth Annual Report of the Social Service League, St. Aloysius' College, Mangalore is the most satisfying. It is hard to single out all the meritorious activities of those 93 selfless

workers : poor relief, milk distribution, village sanitation, rural working camps, mobile homoeo dispensary, etc. What is most gratifying is their literacy drive ; not less than five night-schools run regularly by *unpaid* staffs. So and so schools, please copy !

The report is methodical and clear as the sheet of a case-worker. But the most comforting feature is the unbounded enthusiasm and resourcefulness of that splendid gang who neglects no occasion of doing good, and no occasion of securing help from official and private sources.

Another striking feature which comes out between the stock of facts and the stack of figures is the solidarity between staff and pupils, as well as between the various communities represented in the College. A wonderful spirit which justifies the hope that social service will forge one of the strongest bonds of unity of renascent India. Well done, St. Aloysius ; let your light shine on all colleges !

## BOOK NOTES & REVIEWS

The attention of social workers is called to the series of studies on vocational guidance published in the *International Labour Review*.

The January issue treats of the vocational guidance services in Switzerland. (New Zealand, the U.K., Belgium, the U.S.A., Sweden, Poland, Argentina, France, and Australia were surveyed previously).

In Switzerland at present there are 305 services providing vocational guidance with 209 male and 101 female counsellors, and vocational guidance enjoys the respect of the employers and the authorities. Better still, the young Swiss citizens are said to seek guidance, not for the sake of having an apprentice vacancy found for them, but rather for a better understanding of their own inclinations and abilities.

We are eagerly waiting for a like report on India. Guidance was recommended by the 1949 International

Labour Conference and is duly mentioned in our Five Year Plan.

*Industrial Housing in India*, by S. C. Aggarwal, Roxy Printing Press, New Delhi, 528 pages, price Rs. 13-8-0.

This is an excellent book of reference for people who would like to know the present position of industrial housing in the country, and the attempts Government is making to solve the problem of acute housing shortage in the major industrial cities of India. All the latest reports of the Housing Committees have been included, with ample excerpts from important foreign reports on the same question. In his position as Salt Commissioner, New Delhi, the author has had free access to important sources and statistics that have yielded valuable information on the housing situation in each state. He has also described the position of industrial housing in regard to each industry taken separately.

But despite these attempts at completeness, there are important lacunae in the book. For one thing, the sociological aspect of housing should have been stressed with great emphasis. Men need not only material shelter but a home, and therefore a decent house to satisfy such a basic fundamental need. The primary social institution of the family must also be taken into consideration when planning out housing requirements. Then again, sufficient attention has not been drawn to the fact of the intimate relation between proper housing and the workman's efficiency. Focussing the public mind on these essentially human aspects of the housing problem will go a long way to rousing public opinion to discover a quick method of relieving such distress.

Had the book been more humanistic in outlook and less loosely composed, it might have made a very valuable addition to the comparatively meagre bibliography on housing available in this country. But there can be no doubt that the information contained in the book is extremely useful, and on that score alone among many others, the author deserves our deep appreciation and gratitude. A. F.

# SOCIAL CHRONICLE

## ASPECTS OF THE LABOUR QUESTION

It is impossible to know them all. But if we want to know the chief trends of the Labour question we may turn to the speech of the Hon'ble V. V. Giri, Minister for Labour, delivered at the opening of the XII Labour Session at Nainital in October last.

The first question mooted was the one of compulsory arbitration. It has to go by the board because the clearest result brought about by it has been an increase of litigation with the ordinary consequences of loss of time and money.

The All-India Trade Union Congress agrees to the suppression of compulsory arbitration because it would lead to over-dictatorship of the working class. If free bargaining fails, strikes or arbitration are the ways opened.

The Indian National Trade Union Congress is in favour of compulsory adjudication in case of failure of voluntary conciliation.

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha thinks that strikes are the means in case of failure to settle a point. They admit collective bargaining and free arbitration at the request of either employers or workers as avenues opened to settle matters generally.

The United Trade Union Congress salutes in voluntary arbitration and conciliation an ideal which cannot work in the present circumstances of weakness of the workers. They then ask for compulsory conciliation and arbitration.

So much for the diversity of opinion among workers. Let us see what are the opinions among Employers. "The Employers Federation of India" rejects as radically wrong all compulsory arbitration and conciliation.

But the "All-India Manufacturers' Organisation" would restrict compulsory settlement of disputes to public utility services and few other cases.

The complicated organisation set up by the Industrial Dispute Act of 1947 should be simplified. Would remain only "Works Committees or Joint Committees"—"Conciliation officers"—"Boards of Conciliation" and "Industrial Tribunals or Courts of Arbitration".

Workers Unions want the civil employees in the Defence Department to be looked upon as ordinary workers and not as belonging to a special category.

Civil Servants of the State should not according to Government, be members of mixed Unions, comprising Government and non-Government workers. This in order to avoid Civil Government Servants risking to be carried into purely political discussions. Would the banks be numbered among the "Utility Services" and see their rights to strike curtailed by compulsory arbitration? The question remains unsolved.

Unions should be compulsorily recognized, think Government Workers and a certain number of Employers. When there is a discussion about collective bargaining, several Unions may claim to represent the workers, which of them should be chosen? Some employers want the matter to be left to their discretion. Generally Government, Workers, and the majority of the Employers are for the recognition of only one Union, to avoid useless loss of time in discussion. But which? The one which has the greatest number? No solution has been found. Some Unions are for the recognition of all Unions having a certain percentage, and others for the acceptance of all Unions since judgments in the past have accepted the principle that several Unions can represent the interest of the worker in one and the same firm?

Employers should be glad if dismissal and retrenchment should not come under the scope of Industrial disputes. Workers on the contrary insist that they should. They even go to the extent that no retrenchment should take place without the assent of the tribunal.

About dismissal workers think that it should be forbidden during industrial disputes. Else under the pretence of misconduct, not connected with the actual discussion, Employers in the past sent away workers representing the interests of the workers.

After unjust dismissal, workers claim the right to reinstatement and compensation. Employers want freedom to choose one or the other.

Control over recalcitrant employers who refused to comply with the terms of an agreement or threatened closure as a result of an actual or apprehended strike should be vested in Government.

No new light has been shed on the vexed question of the admission of non-workers in the Unions and their Committees. Trade Unionists think that in the actual weakness of labour it is impossible to find leaders among them. So they should get them from among the intellectuals. Employers are in majority in favour of their total exclusion. The Government is for a restriction of their number, it could be one-third or one-fourth of the total number of members of the Committees.

The differences between Workers and Employers appear in the subsequent discussions which prepare the Legislation. Not without reason the workers fear that the Employers will try to diminish and if they could, suppress their Trade Unions. Employers see in the Trade Unions machines working not only for the betterment of their employees but oftener than not machines set up for political purpose.

Mr. Aneurin Bevan gave in leaving India this advice to the workers: "The workers of England succeeded when they cut themselves away from the Liberals." "The workers' protection should not be sought by legal support alone, but by the power of the workers."

Mr. Naval H. Tata, Director of Tata's, is optimist and sees today a great scope for the reconciliation between labour and capital. There is also room for active and friendly co-operation between Government and Industry. But to na-

tionalize an industry and ask the same industry to indicate how it should be achieved is to put a noose round the condemned man and ask him to discuss the knot with the hangman. Our labour legislation and labour situation is one-sided . . . It was wrong to say that Indian labour was cheap ; labour legislation had therefore to be correlated with the results produced by labour."

Nobody will deny that on account of several causes : climatic conditions, undernourishment, analphabetism, Indian labour productivity is lower than that of other countries. With all its defects the low productivity of labour in India has brought to industrialists yearly crores of rupees. Is it not justice that workers may get a little more their legitimate share in the profit ?

On the other hand Mr. Durkar Desai, General Secretary of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, finds the projects of social legislation in favour of the workers should be more liberal.

For him collective bargaining should be the way of agreeing between workers and employers. Government thinks in the same manner.

The full right to strike should be recognized. Labour Ministers think it should be restricted or altogether suppressed as well as its counterpart, the right of the lock-out.

Black-legs should be penalized, asks Mr. Desai ! Are not workers persons having the right to dissent from a decision of their Trade Unions they judge unwise ? Or are not Trade Unionist workers bound to follow the decisions of the Unions ?

Picketing should be allowed ? Of course in principle this picketing would be non-violent. That is to say it would consist in moral violence and compulsion and would end, as often happens, with pure and simple violence.

Trade Unions should be strengthened. In this last conclusion he voices the general feeling and of Government and of the other Unions.

Obstacles are in the way to strengthen the Trade Unions. Recognition is one of them. For example in



Madhya Pradesh the complaint is raised that Government favours I.N.T.U.C. Unions, granting them recognition without inquiries, while for others inquiries are not done directly but through Collectors and other persons.

### *Unemployment*

Unemployment is a chronic disease in India. Gandhiji tried to tackle the problem of partial unemployment of the rural population. The five-year plan will try to palliate the general crisis. Meanwhile it stares one in the face.

It is next to impossible to know the exact extent of unemployment in India. The caste and joint family systems prevent people being officially numbered among the destitute; seasonal labour takes them off the roll of idlers. In October 1952 (for the current year) there were 1,264,578 registered unemployed, and 1,476,699 at the end of the year, with a total of 327,828 placements, while in 1951 there were 1,375,351 registrations and 416,858 placements, according to the "People". In the small State of Bengal the number of educated unemployed reached at the beginning of this year 10,632.

The situation has taken a turn for the worse in Indian industries.

### *Tea Industry*

Fifty to 60,000 tea workers are actually jobless in North East India. According to the Hon'ble V. V. Giri, Minister of Labour at the Centre, for Assam and West Bengal the number of Tea gardens closed are respectively 95 and 14, involving the dismissal of 46,233 persons. Three other tea gardens were shut in Tripura and one in U.P.

Three chief causes are pointed to explain this situation. First competition of foreigners on the different markets. With the agreement now rescinded, the British market took the bulk of India's production. Actually British ships bringing manufactured products and chemicals to China bring back tea which partially ousts the Indian products.

The second is deterioration of quality. Specialists do not agree about its cause.

The third is the excessive cost of production. The man working in tea gardens receives Rs. 1.3 a day. But the planters have to provide for the habitation, hospitalisation of the workers; to build roads, schools, etc. . . . That those necessities have been sparingly provided for appears in the speech of the Hon'ble V. V. Giri, at the 4th Session of the Congress of Industry and Commerce on the 19th December 1952 stating that some of those improvements were long over due. Add to these causes the increase of production from 450 millions of pounds in 1939 to 600 millions in 1952, and you will have a pretty clear view of the picture.

The Hon'ble V. Giri remarked already in December that the methods adopted by some planters have not shown the consideration that is justly expected when one deals with human persons. Some closures were made without reasonable notice being given to the workers. In other cases planters refused to pay off their personnel unless they cleared from the premises.

The results have been misery for the workers and their families and protests against the retention of land by the planters who refuse to work it. Planters were at times isolated in their bungalows, a clash followed, one man at Jalpaiguri was killed and seven wounded. They want an increase of salary and the implement of the Plantation Labour Act which has remained a dead letter. Planters want special banking facilities, to pay the excise only after removal of the tea from the plantation, and possibility of paying supplementary allowances in cash to workers instead of cereals.

The remedies proposed comprise a deduction of 10% on the pay of the planters getting more than Rs. 500 a month, a part of the losses to be paid by the shareholders. Also the formation of a Tea Board, a special duty on tea going out of India, and New York "Tea Talks" where India will take her place in the new organisation.

### **Jute**

During the last six months 10,000 workers have been turned out from the jute factories. Foreign competition, chiefly from Pakistan, with superior grades of jute, better equipment than the one remaining in West Bengal explain the crisis.

It is strange that when Korean and Indo-China wars are going on, all the world production is not required !

### **Textiles**

India who some years ago knew cloth famine seems to have reached today the point of saturation. In U.P. 7,090 workers have been sent away. Silk mills in Bombay have closed, some 8,000 persons being touched. In Shaurasthra the night shift is done away with. In the Madras State the scarcity of water is at the root of the trouble. On account of a want of current (reduced in some places 66.5%) the numbers of working days have been reduced in Coimbatore to 2 or 3 a week. At Madura 5,000 out of the 20,000 textile workers will work only 10 days a month. They have all the same to eat during 30 or 31 days !

### **Industry**

3,830 electricians will be sent away, the Government disposing only of 8 crores instead of 10 for the work of electrification. At Vijayavada 1,500 electricity workers have also been retrenched, some with 6 years of service. The expenditure having been cut by 75 lakhs of rupees.

Bombay : The General Motors, Ltd., will be obliged to close in April on account of want of licence for the importation of motor parts.

Jaipur : Stone cutters are out of work on account of want of material.

### **State Services**

In a general way the policy of retrenchment is applied in the different branches of state services : New Delhi announces that the Civilian Defence will release 5,000 workers.

Poona has been the dismissal of one-thousand of the Arsenal workers.

In Madhya Bharat the temporary clerks will be re-trenched and there will be a reduction of one-third of the junior clerical and ministerial staff.

Hyderabad has started retrenching P.W.D. workers and men in postal services.

35,000 persons are unemployed in Baroda's famine-stricken area.

### Strikes

Fewer strikes and Industrial disputes marked the month of November during which there were 83 disputes involving 47,902 workers, and the number of day-work lost dropped to 270,000, 69 disputes ended within a month, of which 52 lasted more than 5 days. Only in three cases was the duration of the strike more than one month. One of the disputes involved over 10,000 workers and accounted for more than 50,000 man-days lost.

Wages, allowances and bonus were the main points in 34 cases. Workers were successful or partially successful in 23 cases. The second cause of strikes is a question of personnel about 24 cases.

Bombay and W. Bengal accounted for two-fifths of the total time lost.

At Patna 1,000 mica workers, they pretend the award of the tribunal is not being implemented by the owners; — at Sholapur 8000 Bidi workers — in U. P. 4,000 of the 28,000 Patvaris resigned, they want more than Rs 25 a month if they have to work without resorting to bribery. Their resignation makes impossible the survey to be undertaken before presenting the Zemindar abolition bill. Strikes at times profit to some people.

When strikes are brought about by misery, it could be possible to avoid them.

E. Gathier.

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2. To provide theoretical and practical training for social workers.
3. To serve as a centre of information about Catholic social works.

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